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HR, MK, BK

SUBJECT: CYPRUS: GAZA, GUANTANAMO AND GAS LIKELY TO
DOMINATE JANUARY GAERC

REF: SECSTATE 04297

Classified By: A/DCM Warren Hadley, Reasons 1.4 (b), (d)

¶1. (C) Poloffs on January 21 delivered Reftel points on the January 26-27 meeting of the EU's General Affairs and External Relations Council (GAERC) to MFA European Union desk officer Nikos Panayiotou. Panayiotou said that the agenda would likely be truncated, focusing mostly on Gaza, Guantanamo and the Russia-Ukraine gas dispute. On Gaza, Panayiotou said that the GOC would like to see greater EU-US cooperation to improve the situation on the ground, as well as a monitoring agreement and an arms trafficking mechanism to preventing future hostilities. The GOC disapproved of Israel's use of &disproportionate force⁸ and "targeting of UN facilities,"⁸ Panayiotou said, and would support a UN investigation into the legality of Israel's use of certain munitions.

¶2. (C) On the Russia-Ukraine gas dispute, Panayiotou claimed the subject would be addressed on a technical and political basis, but that the bulk of the discussion would occur during the March meeting of EU Heads of State. Nevertheless, the EU foreign ministers will discuss diversifying gas supply, upgrading infrastructure, and investing in renewable sources of energy. On Ukraine's EU membership, Panayiotou would take no position as EU membership is still only "a possibility" and "not currently being discussed," but said Cyprus does support Ukraine's participation in the Eastern Partnership (EP). As for EP membership for Belarus, Panayiotou stated that Cyprus shares USG concerns and he expects the EU would only consider extending an invitation in the spring if it sees significant demonstrated reforms. Panayiotou said that the GOC supports EU integration for Serbia, Croatia and the broader region, provided that all criteria are met. However, Macedonia would need to work to resolve the name dispute before it could be considered. On the EULEX mission in Kosovo, Panayiotou said that he believed things are still "on track" for full operational capability being reached in the coming weeks, but admitted he had received no recent updates.

¶3. (C) Turning finally to Guantanamo and the resettlement of detainees, Panayiotou said that the EU has not yet held extensive discussions. It is taking a "wait and see approach⁸ while awaiting more specific information from the incoming US administration.
Urbancic